



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

News Release

VA Long Beach Healthcare System

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Tech Puts Access to Care at the Fingertips of Veterans

Long Beach, Calif. –VA Long Beach Healthcare System is taking everyday technology and using it to provide world-class care beyond the “Doctor’s Office”. Utilizing smartphones, tablets or other secure video conferencing equipment, VA Long Beach is redefining what delivery of care means and how our Veterans can access care on their terms. Our Telehealth program allows patients and providers to conduct their visits remotely via the Veteran’s camera-enabled device. Veterans can stay in the comfort of their own homes or complete their appointment during their lunch break, while still getting face-to-face time with their clinician and the top-quality care they expect from VA.

“Our current generation of Veterans are managing multiple aspects of life that are aggressively competing for their time, be it work, school, family, or continued service in uniform. Addressing health care needs isn’t always a top priority given the amount of time and resources it takes away from other areas of life. Our goal at VA Long Beach is to make accessing care as easy as pushing a few buttons on a device that we all already have without the obstacles of walking onto the VA campus,” said Dr. Laura Held, Clinical Informatics Officer, VA Long Beach Healthcare System.

Currently, VA Long Beach Healthcare System provides Telehealth for services in the following areas:

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| Primary Care | Gastroenterology | Geriatrics |
| Mental Health | Low Vision Care | Palliative Care |
| Spinal Cord Injury | Sleep Medicine | Polytrauma |
| Home Based Primary Care | Neurology | Occupational Therapy |
| Blind Rehabilitation | Urology | Kinesiotherapy |

With an estimated 81% of Americans owning a smartphone, it is a powerful tool when combined with the efficacy of VA care. Utilization of Telehealth has shown a significant increase from 788 appointments recorded in 2018 to 3,291 for 2019. At current utilization rates, we expect to end 2020 with over 7,000 Telehealth appointments. The number of patients engaged in Telehealth increased from 165 in 2018 to 1,342 in 2019.

Veterans can also use their personal device to email their providers, manage appointments, and view their medical records via My HealthVet at www.myhealth.va.gov.

Interviews and demonstrations with patients, clinicians, and subject matter experts are available upon request.

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